The Builder.

SUPPLEMENT, GRATIS.—SATURDAY, OCT. 25, 1845.

THOUGHTS AS THEY RISE.

BY ONE WHO TRAVELS.

TOUCHING RAILWAYS.

1. It has often occurred to me, when looking along the far-extended lines of a railway, from a quiet bridge in a district far removed from towns, that the mere presence of these rails must have considerable effect on the character and life of the neighbouring population. Few appreciate sufficiently the effect of external circumstances on our thoughts, feelings, and habits. The influence exerted by works of fine art on the beholder is partially admitted, but in reality is even much greater than is believed. And I do not doubt that the constant observance of these iron lines,—straight, parallel, and precise,—must induce greater precision of thought and regularity of conduct.

The tendency of the whole railway system is the same. The exactness observed in the arrival and departure of trains; the calculation of time by *minutes*, not half-hours, conduces to punctuality in other proceedings, awakens sluggish minds, and leads to a consideration of the worth of time and the necessity for making the most of it.

2. The stupidity of mankind as a body, the difficulty with which they receive any new fact, is strikingly shewn by the insane opposition offered for a long time to railways. Even now, the state of the case is but imperfectly understood. It is not generally seen, that railroads being the best roads, must gradually supersede other roads. The formation of railways is but a step in the progress. To remove irregularities, lessen friction, and provide facilities for horse traction, was not a much less advance in a new country than improvements in these respects (and iron rails are nothing more), to provide a road for steam-traction.

It will not be long before men will take the train at the corner of the street instead of an omnibus.

3. Railway directors of even old-established lines have yet much to learn. They ought by this time to have acquired the knowledge, that high charges do not produce most money, yet they are still far from a full appreciation of this fact, and that, too, notwithstanding the profits always made by pleasure-excursions at half the usual fares. They do not yet see that it is better to carry eight persons at sixpence a-piece than two at a shilling. Empty trains cost pretty nearly as much as full ones; and those who travel much find these not seldom, especially on some lines we could name.

4. The construction of railway stations, with reference to the wants of the line, instead of the production of any particular appearance or character of building, has led to many new effects, and to a degree of originality not found in some other buildings. Many of the roofs which have been formed at termini are novel, bold, and skilful: so daring, indeed, in some cases, that the men who designed them would hardly have ventured to construct them over a building under ordinary circumstances. In the new circumstances, and over what might almost be considered temporary constructions, with less feeling of responsibility, they were bolder, had less fear of consequences, and succeeded.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

The first sod on the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway was cut on the 15th inst. by Lord Roden, who took off his coat, and set himself to business in a very workmanlike manner, first raising up a portion of earth and giving it and a twig, signs of possession, to the solicitor of the company, and then raising a barrow full of sod, which he rolled down the platform in the barrow, and discharged it at the termination, amidst the cheers of the multitude assembled. The spot selected for the purpose was a field on the left-hand side of the Dublin road, near the Louth Hospital.——Sir George Cayley suggests two plans for the prevention of accidents on railways, caused by collision or the engine getting off the rails. His first suggestion is, that there should be a very large buffer fixed to the front of each engine, to be composed of "a series of large cushions or mattresses, well packed with some elastic material," to deaden the effect of a sudden collision. His second proposition is, that the front wheels of the engine should be provided with three or more grooves, capable of running on the rails, to prevent the engine being thrown off in case of any obstruction which causes the engine to "jump." By this means the engine would be kept in the course till the train could be stopped; and in many cases the accidents arising from the engine being thrown off the rails would be avoided. —— We understand that an offer has been made recently to the Post-office by the Brighton Company *to carry a mail every train between London and Brighton without charge*. This liberal proceeding will be another means of rendering Brighton a suburb of the metropolis to a greater extent than its hour and a half journey already makes it.——During the past week several experiments have been made on the line between Croydon and Sydenham, with the view of testing the power of the atmospheric traction. During one of the trips, in consequence of some accidental omission in securing the piston to the train, just as the carriages were about half a mile from Croydon, and travelling at the rate of about thirty miles an hour, the piston got loose, and set off through the tube with inconceivable velocity, performing the remaining distance at a speed rather unusual on any railway. On its arrival at the station, as there was no means of stopping it, or moderating its speed, it came in contact with the end of the tube, which it literally smashed to pieces, driving the fragments about in all directions. Fortunately no person was near enough to receive any injury. With this exception the results of all the experiments are stated to have been highly satisfactory. The opening is expected to take place in about ten days or a fortnight, prior to which Sir Robert Peel and a large party of visitors will inspect the line.——Proposals, it is said, have been made to the proprietors of Southwark iron-bridge for the purchase of that structure, with a view of converting it into a city terminus for the South-Eastern, Brighton, and South-Western Railways. —— Mr. R. Rettie, C. E., of Glasgow, lays claim to the merit of having first suggested so far back as 1838, submarine railways similar in construction to the plan of Mr. de la Haye, which we published a fortnight since.——Mr. Swailes's nursery-ground, at Beverley, has been selected as the site of the station of the Hull and Burlington Railway, at Beverley. This was fixed upon on Tuesday last, when George Hudson, Esq., M. P., qualified at the Beverley sessions court as a magistrate for the East Riding, and met a number of influential gentlemen in the district on the subject of this railway.——The managers of the London Stock Exchange have decided upon the establishment of a department for the registration of intelligence affecting railway shares, English and foreign. Circulars are to be addressed to the different companies, requesting a prospectus and map, copies of reports, notices of calls, &c., and weekly returns of traffic belonging to each undertaking. A schedule of inquiries is also sent to be filled up. This creation of a department in which so much useful intelligence may be collected, is much to be commended, a centre of information on this very varied subject being very desirable. —— The Town Council of Liverpool have entered into a contract with the Grand Junction for the transport of convicts to the metropolis, at the rate of a guinea a head, in a special van.——A Universal Railway Contract Company to execute the works on future railways has been projected during the past week. —— The number of new schemes announced for the first time during the last fourteen days is seventy-nine; and the aggregate of their estimated capital is 81,535,500*l*. These facts merit the serious consideration not only of the parties engaged, but of all men interested in the commerce and manufactures of the country.—— Some railway provisional directors have been detected in some dirty tricks at Nottingham. They had joined two schemes opposed to each other: the Nottingham and Gainsborough, and the Gainsborough, Newark and Nottingham. ——The *Cumberland Pacquet* states that the contractors on the Whitehaven Junction Railway have made considerable progress in digging the foundation for a wall in front of the railway embankment a little to the northward of Redness Point, in the direction of Parton. In the course of the past week they have also commenced forming the line from William Pit coal-yard to the point where the line will cross the waggon-way into the intended station.——On the 10th, a meeting of the inhabitants was held at Cheltenham. Captain Lloyd in the chair, for the purpose of considering the best means of securing a central railway terminus, by which all the lines at present in contemplation might converge to a common centre, for the better convenience of the public, and to prevent the public thoroughfares of the town from being intersected more than is absolutely necessary. The result was that after the intentions of the Cheltenham and Oxford Company were fully detailed to the

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